

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 4-6, 21-24, 39-41, 43, and 44 are presently active in this application; Claims 1, 6, 24, and 43 are amended, Claims 2, 3, 7-20 and 25-38 are withdrawn from consideration as directed to a non-elected invention, and Claim 42 is cancelled without prejudice.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claim 43 was objected to as including informalities requiring correction, Claims 1, 4-6, 21-24 and 39-41 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as being indefinite, and Claims 1, 4-6, 21-24 and 39-44 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,316,814 to Nagata et al. (Nagata) in view of Applicants' Admitted Art (AAA).

Applicants thank the Examiner for the courtesy of an interview extended to Applicants' representative on October 4, 2005. During the interview, the differences between the claims and the applied art were discussed. Further, claim amendments clarifying the claims over the applied art were discussed. The present response sets forth new claim amendments and presents new arguments. Arguments presented during the interview are reiterated below.

With regard to the objection to Claim 43, the noted informalities have been addressed by the present amendment. No new matter has been added. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that this objection be withdrawn.

With regard to the rejection of Claims 1, 4-6, 21-24 and 39-41 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, the claims have been amended by the present amendment to clarify the features of the claims. No new matter has been added. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that this rejection be withdrawn.

With regard to the rejection of Claims 1, 4-6, 21-24 and 39-44 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Nagata in view of AAA, that rejection is respectfully traversed.

In light of the outstanding ground for rejection, the independent claims have been amended to clarify that “the main electrodes are in contact with a contact region of the connecting plate, and, in an area under the contact region of the connecting plate, the upper surfaces of the main electrodes are higher than the highest portion of an upper surface of the gate wiring.” No new matter has been added. The claim amendments find support, for example, in Figure 1 and its corresponding description in the specification.

In a non-limiting example, Figure 1 shows the main electrodes 114 in contact with the connecting plate 115 and the upper surfaces of the main electrodes 114 are higher than the highest portion of an upper surface of the gate wiring 110. Also, Figure 1 clearly shows that the gate wiring 110 is “arranged between the main electrodes” 114 (left and right sides of layer 114 in Figure 1).

In contrast, as taught by Nagata, a Vdd wiring layer 15A shown in Figure 1A is provided midway between a photoelectric conversion region 14 and a light shielding film 22A and formed in an interlayer insulating film. The Vdd wiring layer 15A is disposed protruding into the inside of an aperture 23A when viewed from the top of the aperture to define the light admitting region (see Figure 1B). As such, the Vdd wiring layer of Nagata is not the main electrode.

Further, the light shielding film 22A is not directly connected to upper surfaces of electrode 15A. Thus, the Vdd wiring layer 15A of Nagata is different from the claimed electrode. Accordingly, Nagata does not teach or suggest the relationship between upper surfaces of the first and second main electrodes and the highest portion of the gate wiring.

In addition, Nagata does not teach or suggest that wiring layer 13 is arranged between the wiring layers 15A. Figures 1A-B of Nagata clearly show that wiring layer 13 is underneath wiring layer 15A, contrary to the above discussed features of Claims 1, 6, and 24.

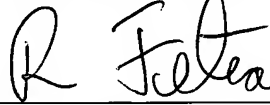
The outstanding Office Action relies on AAA for showing in Figure 21 a connecting plate directly connected to an upper surface of the main electrodes. However, Figure 21 of AAA does not show any electrodes directly connected to a connecting plate as required by Claims 1, 6, and 24. It is noted that Figure 21 of AAA shows a void between connecting plate 2109 and a source electrode 2105. Thus, Figure 21 of AAA does not cure the deficiencies of Nagata discussed above. Accordingly, neither Nagata nor AAA discloses the features recited by the independent claims.

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that the amended independent claims patentably define over the applied art and are in condition for allowance. Further, it is respectfully requested that the withdrawn dependent claims be reinstated and are now in condition for allowance based at least on their dependency to the elected independent claims. As such, all dependent claims define over the art of record for at least the reasons discussed above and are in condition for allowance.

Consequently in view of the present amendment and in light of the above discussion, no further issues are believed to be outstanding, and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.



Eckhard H. Kuesters
Attorney of Record
Registration No. 28,870
Remus F. Fetea, Ph.D.
Limited Recognition No. L0037

Customer Number
22850

Tel: (703) 413-3000
Fax: (703) 413 -2220
(OSMMN 06/04)

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